American Embassy,
Baghdad, Iraq, July 18, 1949.

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE JAN 1977
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To: The Ambassador

From: Second Secretary Allen

Subject: Preliminary Notes on Settlement of Iraqi Tribesmen.

These brief notes have been prepared as a preliminary answer to the question raised in the last paragraph of Mr. McGhee's letter of June 22, regarding the general problem of settling Iraqi tribes.

It will be recalled that when the question of settling Palestine refugees in Iraq was raised with them, both Prime Minister Nuri As-Said and Foreign Minister Jamali stressed that, apart from other difficulties, no refugees could possibly be settled until "after the needs of Iraqi tribesmen have been met."

Dr. Jamali in his May 7, 1949 interview with you said that, according to present Iraqi plans for development, newly irrigated land will be distributed to landless Iraqi tribesmen, and that in view of the need of Iraqi tribesmen for land, attempts to give land to refugees before the needs of the tribesmen were met, would necessarily result in serious internal disorder. Similarly, on May 8, the Prime Minister emphasized that the first new lands made available must be given to landless Iraqi tribesmen.

The following notes are an attempt to explain, in the preliminary fashion which is all that is possible at present due to the paucity of available facts on the subject, the tribal settlement problem that the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister had in mind.

1. Despite the fact that Iraq is underpopulated, there are many thousands of agricultural, or potentially agricultural Iraqis, who do not own land, but want and need agricultural land as a means of gaining a livelihood.

2. These

2. These landless Iraqis fall into three categories, - village (i.e. non-tribal) cultivators who work land belonging to others, tribally organized cultivators who work land belonging to others, and nomadic (sheep or camel raising) tribesmen who are not now cultivators, - but who want to settle down and become cultivators if they are given land. The phrase "Iraqi tribesmen" denotes both the tribesmen-cultivators and the nomadic tribesmen.

3. Perhaps Iraq's most pressing social and economic problem is the need to settle the Iraqi tribesmen on small holdings, so that this comparatively lawless element, becoming men of property, will at the same time increase the country's agricultural wealth, - and be subject to such governmental usages as taxation.

4. The principal nomadic tribesmen who are prepared to settle on new land are in the north, - the Shammar, west of the Tigris (approximately 8,000 tents, - perhaps 40,000 to 50,000 persons), and the Ubeid and the Jubur, largely in the area between the Tigris and Kirkuk, - each of which probably number somewhat less than the Shammar.

5. Most of the tribesmen in the south are already cultivators, but working land belonging to others, - either land belonging to tribal sheiks (sheiks of their own, or other tribes) or to townsmen land owners. In either case, under the present agricultural system, they do not make a decent livelihood, and all, or nearly all, would prefer to work on land they own themselves. Distributing land to a sufficient proportion of them, would, by creating a demand for labor, raise the living standards for all agricultural labor in South Iraq. There are also a certain number of nomadic tribesmen in South Iraq ready for settlement.

6. As stated above, there are in the south a large number (how many is not known) of landless agricultural laborers, many still tribally

organized

organized, who [illegible] meager livelihood by working under oppressive conditions, land belonging to big land owners. These are so dissatisfied with their lot that thousands have moved to the towns, especially Baghdad, - preferring life under slum conditions in Baghdad to their hard and unrewarding life cultivating the land of others on inequitable terms. It has been estimated that as many as 20,000 of these displaced agricultural laborers are now living on the outskirts of Baghdad.

Among these tribesmen, and among progressive Iraqis, there is widespread and growing sentiment in favor of dividing newly developed State Domain land into small holdings, and giving title to such holdings to these landless cultivators.

7. To illustrate the nature of the need, or the right, of Iraqi tribesmen to settle on much of the new land which will be created as Iraq development plans are carried out, I list here certain of the development projects, and hitherto unsettled areas on which, theoretically, refugees could be settled, but to which Iraqi tribesmen have prior claim:

a. The Dujaila Project (Kut Liwa)

80,000 Mesharas* of new land is still not distributed, but arrangements have been made to settle on them local tribesmen and village cultivators.

b. The Hawija Project (Kirkuk Liwa)

34,000 Mesharas of new land not yet settled. The Ubeid tribe (as well as local cultivators) is being settled on this land.

c. The Babil Canal Extension (Near Hillah)

This

*One Meshara is 2500 square meters, or approximately 5/8 of an acre.

This is a long range scheme, dependent now, on outside financing. It could create 670,000 mesharas of new land, in 4 to 5 years. The land is nearly all State Domain, but the large and powerful Albu Sultan tribe, which lives in the neighborhood, would press claims for this land.

d. The Gharraf Extension (South of Kut)

A long range scheme which could create 500,000 mesharas of new land. This land is largely already claimed by Muntafiq tribesmen and the Sa'adun family (in compensation for lands expropriated from them in the Muntafiq).

e. Rainfall area East of the Upper Tigris.

A certain proportion of this area is still State Domain and thus potentially could be settled, but how much is uncertain. The Ubeid and Jubur tribes which range over this area, have, therefore, first claims on this land.

f. Rainfall area West of the Upper Tigris. (Lands south, west and north of the Gebel Sinjar)

This is largely State Domain, but it is part of the grazing lands of the Shammar tribe. The Government would probably like to settle them there (if the rainfall is sufficient), and Sheik Ahmed, paramount sheik of the Shammar, has informed the reporting officer that his tribesmen are eager to try to settle this area, as soon as they can get seed and agricultural machinery and technical help from the Government.

8. The above are the principal future settlement areas where tribal claims are particularly strong. There are other areas where tribal claims are weaker, or non-existent, where refugee settlement would, comparatively speaking, be easier to carry out because of the absence of local tribal

tribal claims. Informed observers, however, are agreed that refugee settlement anywhere in Iraq would be politically impossible, unless half the refugee land development and settlement funds were used to benefit a number of landless Iraqis equal to the number of refugees. In other words, of Iraqi State land developed with refugee funds, half should go to Iraqis and half to refugees.

9. A supplement to the present memorandum, discussing the areas where refugees could conceivably be settled with the least difficulty, if sizeable funds are provided, is being prepared by the reporting officer.

FOAllen:emd